



**SHIP** — Self –Help Information Project

## **Action Plan Final Evaluation Report**

September 30, 2002

1. Completed community focused action plan for serving self-represented litigants: see attached **ACTION PLAN TO ASSIST SELF-REPRESENTED LITIGANTS**
2. Statement of project activities and progress implementing the action plan: see attached **ACTION PLAN TO ASSIST SELF-REPRESENTED LITIGANTS**, Section 3.
3. Description of grant funds expended and work provided by any consultant:
  - A. Funds expended: see Attachment 3
  - B. Work provided by consultant SHELLEY STUMPF
    - 1.) Samples of various community, court, and service provider surveys
      - a. Stanislaus County Customer, Court, and Community/Court Users surveys were drafted by the SHIP Committee, forms created, surveys processed and reports generated by Court's

# **Action Plan Final Evaluation Report, cont.**

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ScanTron technician, Kris Pierson.

- 2.) Sample action plan work sheets/small group facilitators' instructions.
  - a. Stanislaus County Community Conference materials drafted and printed by SHIP committee members.
- 3.) Shelley Stumpf attended one SHIP committee meeting in Modesto, Richard Smith, on behalf of Shelley Stumpf, attended one SHIP committee meeting in Modesto with Ms. Stumpf available for part of the meeting by telephone. Telephone conferences with Shelley Stumpf and/or Richard Smith.
- 4.) Community Conference facilitated by Richard Smith, on behalf of Shelley Stumpf, on 4/26/02. Over 80 participants representing broad range of service and community groups. See Action Plan and attachments for further details.
- 5.) Review of Community Conference workgroups reviewed by Richard Smith and sample Action Plan Template with suggestions provided.
  - a. SHIP committee held follow-up meetings, which included a work group composed of Community Conference attendees, prepared summaries of small group results from Conference, and drafted the Action Plan submitted herewith.
  - b. No drafting or final review of the Action Plan provided by Shelley Stumpf or Richard Smith.

## **Action Plan Final Evaluation Report, cont.**

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4. Other information relevant to providing a comprehensive description of status of countywide community-focused court planning activities relating to self-represented litigants:

A. SHIP Committee and Work Group meeting held 10/3/02.

B. First-ever public LEGAL RESOURCE FAIR scheduled from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Saturday, October 23, 2002, in Modesto. Of 44 service providers invited to participate, approximately 12 have registered to participate as of 10/3/02. More providers are expected to register as participants in the coming weeks.

C. Second public LEGAL RESOURCES FAIR tentatively scheduled for April/May, 2003.

D. Legal Services Provider Directory completed for Community Conference held 4/26/02; updates and additions on-going.

E. Additional relevant information: See Action Plan.

Respectfully submitted by:

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**Suzanne M. Whitlock, on behalf of the SHIP – Self-Help  
Action Project of California, Superior Court of  
California, County of Stanislaus**

**ACTION PLAN TO ASSIST SELF-REPRESENTED LITIGANTS****Introduction**

This Action Plan To Assist Self-Represented Litigants is the product of the Superior Court of Stanislaus County. The S.H.I.P. – Self-Help Information Project committee, made up of court representatives, service agency representatives, and community members, assisted the Court in its development. **(See Attachment 1 - the S.H.I.P. Committee Member Roster.)** A S.H.I.P. – Work Group Crew, made up of additional court representatives, service agency representatives, and community members, has also assisted the Court in the development of this plan. **(See Attachment 2 - the S.H.I.P. Work Group Crew Roster.)** The services of a planning consultant were utilized to a limited extent.

The Action Plan to Assist Self-Represented Litigants continues and expands on goals set forth in the Court's general Action Plans dated April 14, 2000. The plan also advances the principles set forth in the mission statements for the Court, S.H.I.P., and the Stanislaus County Law Library. **(See Attachment 3 – Mission Statements.)**

The Court wishes to acknowledge the wholehearted support and the many and continuing contributions of all who helped in the development of this Action Plan. The Court also looks forward to continuing its collaboration with its community in fully achieving the desired primary result: more informed court users who have ready access to justice services.

It is anticipated that this Action Plan will be periodically updated and refined as steps for implementation proceed and results measured, collaborative/cooperative projects undertaken, and as more data is collected and analyzed regarding other unmet needs. Plans to meet later identified needs will be required. The next meeting of the S.H.I.P. Committee and Work Crew is scheduled for October 3, 2002.

- 1. Description of Need and Persons to be Assisted:** The Superior Court of California, County of Stanislaus, is committed to providing access to justice for all the people it serves. The Court serves a county population which is extremely diverse in education, income, language, and ethnic background. **(See Attachment 4 – CENSUS 2000 HIGHLIGHTS – Stanislaus County: Population, Sex, Age, Race, Median Income, Poverty Level, (summary of some facts) and Attachment 5 – CENSUS 2000 HIGHLIGHTS).** Despite its current limitations, the Court is able to identify the following information about the numbers and types of self-represented litigants using the

courts in Stanislaus County and the goals to be achieved by the Court and its community to ensure fair and meaningful access to justice for all.

1. **A. Identification of Persons to be served and unmet needs:** In determining the persons to be served under the action plan, the Court utilized statistics currently compiled by the Court, see COURT CASELOAD by Case Type – Fiscal Years 99/00 and 00/01 at 1.A.1., below; statistics collected and reported by the Family Law Facilitator’s office using the ScanTron-based automated statistics program operated by the Stanislaus County Superior Court for the AOC under contract; together with baseline statistics compiled by the S.H.I.P. - Self-Help Information Project Committee for the purpose of preparing, and implementing, the Action Plan To Assist Self-Represented Litigants. Also incorporated were the results of a community conference of 80 county agencies and community groups as well as representatives of the Superior Court of Stanislaus County and the Superior Court of San Joaquin County which was organized and conducted by the S.H.I.P.

The purpose of the day-long Conference, held on April 26, 2002, was to educate participants about problems faced by self-represented litigants; provide information about existing law-related services and resources in the community and via the internet; to encourage and facilitate networking between a broad variety of public agencies and community groups; to plan for cooperative ventures to provide services to the self-represented; to identify and to devise creative solutions to address the unmet needs of the self-represented in various communities using the most economical means and reaching the largest number of people possible by developing materials and information to be shared with other courts; and, through networking and sharing information, to help avoid duplication of services by public agencies and/or community groups.

The Court, on behalf of the S.H.I.P. Committee, applied for and has received an AOC grant to implement its Action Plan. (**See Attachment 6 – Application for Funding to Develop and Implement Community Focused Action Plans to Serve Self-Represented Litigants, including Action Plan Grant Status Report (through May 16, 2002.)**) The S.H.I.P. Committee and its Work Group Crew have held various follow-up meetings to refine the goals and unmet needs identified earlier, to identify solutions, and to undertake implementation of solutions.

#### **UNIQUE APPROACHES:**

Among the unique projects designed to implement the plan are:

- Scheduling a first-ever public **LEGAL RESOURCE FAIR** to be held Saturday, October 26, 2002. Approximately 36 community service groups, county agencies, and representatives of the Superior Court of Stanislaus County and the Superior Court of San Joaquin County have been invited to participate and provide information about law-related services available to the public. (**See Attachment 7 – Self Help Information Project S.H.I.P. Legal Resource Fair flyer and Attachment 8 – Legal Resource Fair**

**INVITATION LIST.)** Additional surveys and community input will be gathered at the Legal Resource Fair and surveys will be conducted in various public locations in the near future.

- Using a ScanTron-based automated statistics program to gather, record and report baseline statistics and follow-up surveys for purposes of determining unmet needs and customer demographics
- Using Language Line (a private services with 140 languages available by telephone) to provide interpreter services
- Increasing use of the Court's existing TTY equipment and in-court assistive listening devices with outreach targeted to groups providing services to the hearing-impaired and others with other special needs
- Involving representatives from service providers, public agencies, and community and cultural groups providing services to/interacting with pro per litigants in developing and implementing the Court's Action Plan
- Providing in-service training for other public agencies and to community, service clubs and cultural organizations on the Court, its function, and legal resources available or needed in the community

**1.a.1. COURT CASELOAD by Case Type – Fiscal Years 99/00 and 00/01  
- see following table**

**1.a.1. COURT CASELOAD by Case Type – Fiscal Years 99/00 and 00/01**

Category of NEW Filings	Actual 99/00	Actual 00/01
<b><u>Family Case Type:</u></b>		
* <b>Probate</b> (including guardianships)	573	699
* <b>Family Law</b> (including Domestic Violence, Dissolution of Marriage/Legal Separation, Civil (non-governmental) Paternities, Petitions for Child Custody and Child Support)	2,153	2,181
* <b>Juvenile Dependency</b>	285	325
* <b>Juvenile Delinquency</b>	1,593	1,472
* <b>Mental Health</b>	207	231
* <b>Other Civil Petitions</b> (including DCSS-Dept. of Child Support Services Paternity and/or Child Support establishment/enforcement cases)	4,517	4,547
<b>TOTAL FAMILY LAW CASES</b>	<b>9,328*</b>	<b>9,455*</b>
<b><u>Civil Case Type:</u></b>		
Auto PI/PD/D	700	717
Other PI/PD/D	218	247
Other Civil Complaints	1,042	1,127
Appeals from Lower Court	137	97
Criminal HC	4	34
Limited Civil (under \$25,000)	7,949	7,722
Unlawful Detainers (included above in Limited Civil filings)	4,646	3,817
Small Claims		
<b>TOTAL (NON-FAMILY) CIVIL CASES</b>	<b>14,696</b>	<b>13,761</b>
<b><u>Criminal Case Type:</u></b>		
Criminal Felony	5,550	5,487
Class A&C Misd	8,286	8,025
Class D&D Misd	2,681	2,591
Traffic/Non Traffic Infractions	47,733	44,453
<b>TOTAL CRIMINAL CASES</b>	<b>64,247</b>	<b>60,556</b>
<b>TOTAL CASES FILED (Family, Civil, Criminal)</b>	<b>88,271</b>	<b>83,772</b>

\* For Family Law Cases

and DCSS paternity/child support establishment cases, the Court has adopted a policy of encouraging “one

family-one file” which has reduced the number of new family law cases being filed in spite of continuing increases in population.

Limitations in former case management systems employed by the Court make tracking the exact numbers of self-represented litigants filing new cases as well as litigants representing themselves in pro per in existing cases difficult to determine. However, estimates developed by the Administrative Offices of the Court and Judicial Council indicate that statewide 60% to 70% percent of all litigants involved in family law cases, which would include Domestic Violence, Dissolution of Marriage/Legal Separation/Nullity of Marriage, Civil (non-governmental) Petitions to Establish the Parental Relationship, Petitions for Child Custody and Child Support (non-governmental actions) are self-represented. With regard to Department of Child Support Services (DCSS – formerly known as the District Attorney’s Family Support Division) Paternity, Child Support establishment and/or enforcement cases, including foster care and other public facilities custodial care costs reimbursement cases, the AOC/JC estimates are that 80% to 90% of all litigants (custodial and non-custodial parents, non-parent caregivers) are self-represented.

**1.B. Growth rate of pro per litigants is accelerating faster than growth of court caseload overall:** In addition to the overall increases in county population served and increases in caseload which have outpaced increases in Court facilities and manpower, the numbers of individuals using the Courts without being represented by an attorney also continues to rise at an ever faster rate. From anecdotal observation, the Court believes that in the family law court 70% to 75% of litigants in new and continuing cases are self-represented. This percentage is higher than the AOC/JC’s statewide estimates set forth above. The rising numbers of self-represented litigants mean that increasing numbers of people need assistance from the Court because they don’t understand how to follow court procedures or they are unable to easily access court information.

It is believed that these limitations often slow court proceedings and cause unnecessary delays in the administration of justice. Most of the litigants who represent themselves appear in Family Law matters, which raises the question of how well the justice and other human services systems are serving the families and children who are the very foundation of our communities.

**1. C. The Court’s past efforts to assist self-represented litigants will serve as the foundation for the Action Plan To Assist Self-Represented Litigants:**

The Court has sought to address the needs of self-represented litigants has been to encourage the use of the Court’s Small Claims Advisor; Family Law Facilitator’s Office; Family Court Services, which provides child custody and visitation mediation, custody investigations, and on-site drug-testing in mediation cases; and, the Stanislaus County Law Library.

The Court has also provided self-represented litigants access to information about the Court and Court procedures, including the complete Local Rules of Court,



using technology by establishing a Court website at

[www.co.stanislous.ca.us/courts](http://www.co.stanislous.ca.us/courts) which also includes downloadable forms.

**1.D. Evaluations:** Program evaluations will be ongoing using S.H.I.P. ScanTron-based Customer Survey, Court Survey, and Public and Service Provider Survey forms and report formats previously adopted; direct customer, court, and service provider input. Baseline data has been collected and reported using the three S.H.I.P. surveys. Other criteria for determining effectiveness for each program will be developed as implementation proceeds. The Court, S.H.I.P. committee, its Work Group, and Persons/Organizations identified as responsible for each task will be responsible for ongoing evaluation of the programs.

**2. Program Areas:** To best address the needs of Self-Represented Litigants in Stanislaus County, the Court with the assistance of its S.H.I.P. – Self-Help Information Project Action Planning Committee and participants in a service provider conference hosted by the Court, has identified the following areas for action. The goals of the Court’s plan are:

**GOAL 1. Getting the Word Out: Increasing Awareness of the Availability of Legal and Human Services**

**GOAL 2. Working Smarter Through Collaboration: Finding Alternative Ways of Providing Service**

**GOAL 3. Internet Connections: Using Technology to Deliver Services and Information**

**GOAL 4. Getting Legal Help: Augmenting the Availability of Legal Services**

**GOAL 5. Increasing Understanding of Roles and Operation of Courts and Service Providers**

**NOTE:** Because of its emphasis on meaningful access to the Court, implicit in each of these Action Plan goals is the Court’s goal of providing language access to all Court users. This goal will be a core element in all efforts to address the needs of self-represented litigants and all Court users. Language access projects include:

- increased use of Language Line (a private services with 140 languages available by telephone) in the Courtroom providing additional funding for personnel and charges obtained
- addition of more bi-lingual Court staff (some court clerks already receive bi-lingual pay for English-Spanish)
- development of additional certified and registered interpreters emphasizing the involvement of and outreach to community

leaders and cultural organizations, Stanislaus County Department of Education, CA State University Stanislaus, Modesto Junior College, and the Court's Coordinator of Interpreter Services

- increased use and availability of English-Spanish interpreters in Domestic Violence cases involving child custody mediation funded by a grant obtained by Court's Director of Interpreter Services
- increased use of the i-Communicator voice recognition hardware and software to facilitate access to Court services by the hearing-impaired purchased by the Court with grant funds. Initial training of Court staff has been completed and outreach to groups providing services to the hearing-impaired is anticipated
- increased use of the Court's existing TTY equipment and in-court assistive listening devices with outreach to groups providing services to the hearing-impaired anticipated

### **3. Self-Represented Litigant Action Plan Goals:**

#### **3. A. GOAL 1. GETTING THE WORD OUT - Increasing Awareness of the Availability of Legal and Human Services.**

**Population To Be Served:** People in Stanislaus County need access to or information about the Court, as well as all court staff, other service providers and agencies within the county, in order to effectively represent themselves in Court. Target communities include those geographically remote from Court locations; those with limited access to or awareness of Court services; and, Court users with special needs and/or disabilities.

**Types of Services To Be Offered:** Some of the types of services that may be offered include:

- Service Provider Networking
- Centralized Resource and Referral
- Outreach into communities
- Touch Screen computers with phone help at Court House, Stanislaus County Law Library, Community Service Agency (CSA), etc.
- Outreach to schools: PTA, Migrant Education Classes, Families First, Head Start
- Network with other Agencies to identify customers
- Brochures modeled after computer program
- Signs posted at a variety of locations
- Stanislaus Legal Hotline (Automated)

**Locations Where Services Will Be Delivered.** Court House locations; other community locations; public and campus libraries; service club centers in the county; school and college campuses.

**3.A.1. Program Partners:** Potential community partners and resources that may participate in and contribute efforts to getting the word out to ensure access to court information and services are:

- Curbside News
- United Way information referral
- Kinship Center
- C.S.A. - Community Service Agency
- Children's Coordinating Council, Domestic Violence Coordinating Council, other existing collaborative committees as identified
- C.R.L.A. – California Rural Legal Assistance
- D.R.A.I.L. – Disability Resource Agency for Independent Living
- Friends are Good Medicine – Stanislaus County Behavioral Health Services
- Modesto Bee
- Stanislaus County Dept. of Education

**3.A.2. Program Plan:**

<i>Task</i>	<i>Resources Required</i>	<i>Person/Org. Responsible**</i>	<i>Time</i>
Create Law-Related Resource Providers Directory	Volunteer time; computers and software; funds for printing costs; means to disseminate on-line	Kathryn Rose, staff attorney at CRLA; S.H.I.P. Committee	April 26, 2002  <b>COMPLETED</b> Updates and distribution to be ongoing
First-ever Public LEGAL RESOURCE FAIR	Accessible meeting space; funds for booths, space costs, publicity/advertising, flyers, refreshments for resource agencies	Joyce Fischer, Outreach Coord. For DCSS; Suzanne M. Whitlock, Family Law Facilitator	October 26, 2002  <b>UNDERWAY</b> - possible 2 <sup>nd</sup> Fair in May,

<i>Task</i>	<i>Resources Required</i>	<i>Person/Org. Responsible**</i>	<i>Time</i>
Design & Schedule Events/Open Houses not shared with other agencies	participants, newspapers/TV /radio ads	(FLF) Court personnel	2003, Law Day tie-in
Design and distribution of informational/educational brochures	Accessible meeting space	Presenting agency representatives	Various future dates
Identification of self-represented litigants and their unmet needs; identification of special needs groups	Personnel time; computer hardware and software; funds for brochure racks; funds for printing costs; distribution by other agencies and community groups; on-line access	Court personnel	mid-October, 2002  <b>UNDERWAY</b> - update and expansion on-going
	Personnel time; Scan-Tron based automated statistics processing and reports; funds for printing and distribution costs	Court personnel	Ongoing  <b>Baseline Stats: COMPLETED</b>  <b>INITIAL FUNDING: IMPLEMENTATION GRANT FUNDS AWARDED BY AOC</b>

**\*\* Some level of involvement by the S.H.I.P. Committee and its Work Group, and the Court's Courts and Community Committee is anticipated in implementing all Action Plan goals**

### **3.A.3. Ways to leverage the use of current resources:**

- Encourage agency buy-in
- Use umbrella organization
- Events/open houses, not being shared with other agencies
- Continued collaboration
- Agency In-service training
- Create specialized panels of attorney's to do Pro Bono work
- Posters

- Flyers
- Radio
- T.V.

**3.A.4. Ways in which to increase available resources:**

- Interagency communications
- Media exposure i.e. T.V, Radio
- Multi-lingual approach

**3.A.5. Identifying and meeting unmet needs:**

- Working poor
- Moderate income class
- Cultural communities (Bridge)
- Senior Citizens
- Extended hours or adjusted hours for identified agencies
- Evening or weekend appointments

**3.B. GOAL 2: WORKING SMARTER THROUGH COLLABORATION**

**Population To Be Served.** All self-represented litigants using the Superior Court of Stanislaus County, as well as service providers, public agencies community groups providing services to/interacting with pro per litigants.

**Types of Services To Be Offered.** Some of the types of services that may be provided include:

- Resource Fairs\* - first-ever public LEGAL RESOURCE FAIR scheduled for 10/26/02
- Senior Information Days
- STOAAC council monthly meetings
- Face to Face meetings
- Luncheons
- Working with client's families
- Bank Meetings Luncheons for Seniors RE fraud Issues
- Multi-Cultural Committee
- In-service trainings
- Monthly Commission on Aging meetings
- Customer Surveys
- Law Enforcement, Fire, County Mental Health Agency, Minister collaboration
- Up dated Directory
- Mentors & support groups

**Locations Where Services Will Be Delivered.** Court House locations; other community locations; service provider locations; service club centers in the county; public and school libraries; Stanislaus County Law Library; on-line via Court's website.

### **3.B.2. Program Partners:**

- Existing collaborative committees
- Stanislaus County Law Library
- Stanislaus County Public Libraries
- D.A.'s Office and related divisions, CAU, Victim-Witness program, etc.
- DCSS – Department of Child Support Services
- All existing written directories of service providers
- Stanislaus County service clubs
- Public Safety organizations
- Center for Human Services
- Haven Women's Center

### **3.B.3. Program Plan:**

<i>Task</i>	<i>Resources Required</i>	<i>Person / Org. Responsible**</i>	<i>Time Line</i>
Make a protocol for partnerships.	Personnel time; computers and software	Court personnel; S.H.I.P. Committee	ongoing
Get free help (retirees, students, volunteers)	Personnel time; funds for outreach	S.H.I.P. Committee	ongoing
Produce a Directory that is Informative and Detailed		Kathryn Rose, CRLA staff Attorney; S.H.I.P. Committee	April 26, 2002  <b>COMPLETED</b> Updates and distribution to be on-going
Identify & Locate available Resource Directories	Personnel time; funds to acquire directories		ongoing
<i>Task</i>	<i>Resources Required</i>	<i>Person/Org. Responsible</i>	<i>Time</i>
Design and Promote Speakers Program/In-Service training for service providers, county agencies, and community groups	Personnel time; funds for outreach	S.H.I.P. Committee and Work Group	ongoing

**\*\* Some level of involvement by the S.H.I.P. Committee and its Work Group, and the Court's Courts and Community Committee is anticipated in implementing all Action Plan goals.**

**3.B.3. Ways to leverage the use of current resources:**

- Existing collaborative committees
- All existing written directories (i.e. yellow pages, friends are good medicine)
- Outreach within your organization
- See question 1
- Volunteers
- Government Agencies
- "US"
- Fundraisers
- Encourage customer responsibility
- Education
- EDD-WIB

**3.B.4. Ways in which to increase available resources:**

- Directory of inter-collaborative agency meetings
- Legal information fair on your rights and responsibility
- Newspapers/Advertisements
- Special speakers
- Drawing connections between big pictures
- Affordable legal aid
- Agency communication with public defenders
- Language barriers; Identify where the population lives
- Utilize newspapers, grocery stores, Laundromats, schools.
- Share directories, (schools, churches)
- Easy access to information
- Affordable legal advice
- Lack of funding of services
- Satellite offices or mobile units
- Can paralegals or legal assistants help?

**3.B.5. Identifying and meeting unmet needs:** Continuing identification of self-represented litigants

**3.C. GOAL 3. INTERNET CONNECTIONS: Using Technology to Deliver Services and Information.**

**Population To Be Served.** All people needing access to or information about the Court in order to effectively represent themselves in Court, as well as all Court staff, community groups, and other service providers and agencies within the county whose clients may include self-represented litigants. Target communities include those

geographically remote from Court locations; those with limited access to or awareness of Court services; and, Court users with special needs and/or disabilities.

**Types of Services To Be Offered:** Some of the types of services that may be provided include:

- Standardized platform – connect compatible hardware and software among agencies countywide.
- Uniform reporting process countywide
- Accessibility and simplicity of information
- A Joint Clearing House city-county
- Instruction & Education
- Public & Private access
- Most frequently asked questions (FAQ) feature on Website
- User friendly process and language

**Locations Where Services Will Be Delivered.** Court House locations; information booth 10<sup>th</sup> street; service provider locations; public and school libraries, police dept.

**3.C.1. Program Partners:**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| • CSA – Community Service Agency             | • DCSS – Dept. of Child Support Services  |
| • Stanislaus County Public Libraries         | • AOC/JC of California  |
| • Stanislaus County Law Library              | • County of Stanislaus and Various city governing agencies                                      |
| • Public Safety Agencies and umbrella groups | • D.R.A.I.L. – Disability Resource Agency for Independent Living and NorCal Center for Deafness |
| • D.A.'s Office and related divisions, CAU,  | Stanislaus County Adult and   |
| • Victim-Witness program, etc.               | Juvenile Probation  |
|  | •   |



**3.C.2. Program Plan:**

<i><b>Task</b></i>	<i><b>Resources Required</b></i>	<i><b>Person / Org. Responsible</b></i>	<i><b>Time Line</b></i>
Assess potential Central Location	Office space; funds for personnel, signage, printing, office supplies, etc.	Court personnel; S.H.I.P. Committee and Work Group; ; various City and Stanislaus County representatives	Target within 1 year
Research Touch-Screen technology and computer kiosk requirements for public use to complete, print, and file Judicial Council forms	Computer hardware and related software products; equipment space; personnel to answer questions and monitor equipment use	Court administration and technology staff; FLF; Law Librarian; Stanislaus County Public Libraries Resource staff	Target within 1 year  Initial information gathering underway  <b>INITIAL FUNDING: IMPLEMENTATION GRANT FUNDS AWARDED BY AOC</b>
Research and obtain technology required to provide services to the hearing impaired and other persons with special needs	Personnel time; funds for hardware and software, staff training, printing, signage, advertising, etc.	Court personnel; S.H.I.P. Committee and Work Group; D.R.A.I.L.; NorCal Center for Deafness	Target within 6 months  <b>Initial steps completed:</b> iCommunicator Voice Recognition hardware and software for the hearing-impaired in place and initial training completed; TDD connection in place
Expand and update Court's website, provide Multilanguage information/materials	Personnel time; funds for materials and translations	Court Technology, Coordinator of Interpreter Services, other court staff	Ongoing  <b>COMPLETED: Spanish-language version of Court website</b>

**3.C.3. Ways in which to increase available resources**

- Central location
- Information booth – 10<sup>th</sup> Street
- Library
- Uniformity
- Touch screen, voice recognition

**3.C.4. Identifying and meeting unmet needs**

- Education
- Outreach – forums
- Email to webmaster or information desk
- Collaboration

**3.D. GOAL 4 - GETTING LEGAL HELP: Augmenting the Availability of Law-Related Services.**

**Population To Be Served.** All self-represented litigants using the Superior Court of Stanislaus County, as well as service providers, public agencies community groups providing services to/interacting with pro per litigants.

**Types of Services To Be Offered.** Some of the types of services that may be provided include:

- Providing legal information at the Junior High/High School level
- Collaboration with non-profits / community groups for outreach events
- Leadership training for community leaders

**Locations Where Services Will Be Delivered.** Court House locations; other community locations; service provider locations and service club centers in the county; public and school libraries, internet.

**3.D.1. Program Partners:**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| • Department of Education                                   | • Stanislaus County Bar Association   |
| • Public Safety Agencies and umbrella groups                | • Haven Women's Center of Stanislaus County                                   |
| • VAWA – Immigrant and Refugee Program – Catholic Charities | • District Attorney's Office and divisions: CAU, Victim/Witness Program; etc. |

**3.D.2. Program Plan:**

<i><b>Task</b></i>	<i><b>Resources Required</b></i>	<i><b>Person / Org. Responsible</b></i>	<i><b>Time Line</b></i>
Explore and Secure grant funding for free or reduced cost legal services, including IOLTA (Interest On Lawyers Trust Account) funds	Personnel time; funding for printing, office supplies, postage, research	Court Administration and Finance; C.R.L.A.	Target within 1 year
Design and deliver educational programs to Elected Officials & their staff.	Personnel time; funding for printing, educational materials, equipment	Court Administration and Finance; C.R.L.A.	Target within 2 years  <b>Initial steps completed: FLF AB1058 educational programs ongoing</b>
Design and deliver educational programs to community leaders	Personnel time; funding for printing, educational materials, equipment	Court Administration and Finance; C.R.L.A.	Target within 2 years  <b>Initial steps completed: FLF AB1058 educational programs ongoing</b>
Expand services provided by FLF for AB1058 services; dentify gaps in services due to legislation (i.e. Family Law Facilitator, Self-Help Center, CRLA programs)	Personnel time; funds for additional FLF staff and outreach materials, telephone contacts, on-site visits, etc.	Court Administration and Finance; FLF; C.R.L.A.	Target within 6 months

**3.D.3. Ways to leverage the use of current resources:**

- Meet with all minority group leaders
- Discuss issues/problems
- “Roundtable” constituents
- T.V. Newspapers, Radio Discuss Topics on a weekly basis
- Assyrian, Spanish, Indian, Laotians, etc.

- Obtaining assistance from non-profit/community groups to sponsor information/ Out-reach events (i.e., Bar association with interpreters...Assyrian, Hispanic, etc.)
- Providing legal information at the junior high/ high school level so that students can take the information home to their non-English speaking parents

**3.D.4. Ways in which to increase available resources:**

- Leadership training to community leaders (people in churches, teachers, minority group leaders) so they can provide assistance
- Securing Grants

**3.D.5. Identifying and meeting unmet needs:**

- Gap in free legal services due to legislation (i.e., FLF, CRLA programs)
- Education of elected official and their staff
- Removing language barriers/cultural barriers/religious

**3.E. GOAL 5. INCREASING UNDERSTANDING OF ROLES AND OPERATION OF COURTS AND SERVICE PROVIDERS**

**Population To Be Served.** All self-represented litigants using the Superior Court of Stanislaus County, Court staff, as well as community service providers, public agencies and community groups whose clients may include self-represented litigants.

**Types of Services To Be Offered.** Some of the types of services that may be provided include:

- More free legal advice and information via self-help centers or clinics
- Information binders made available at Court counters, and other specified locations, for all Court information and procedures
- Conflict management / resolution training available
- Court Directory of all court services available to all agencies.
- Expansion and ongoing updates to Court's website

**Locations Where Services Will Be Delivered.** Court House locations; Stanislaus County Law Library; community locations; service provider locations and service club centers in the county; public and school libraries.

**3.E.1. Program Partners:**

- Children's Coordinating Council, Domestic Violence Coordinating Council, other existing collaborative committees as identified
- Child Protective Services - CPS
- VAWA – Immigrant and Refugee Program – Catholic Charities
- Community Service Clubs (Lions, Rotary, Soroptimists, etc), community and cultural centers
- Public Safety Agencies and umbrella groups
- Stanislaus County Bar Association
- Haven Women's Center of Stanislaus County
- District Attorney's Office and divisions: CAU, Victim/Witness Program; etc.

**3.E.2. Program Plan:**

<i><b>Task</b></i>	<i><b>Resources Required</b></i>	<i><b>Person / Org. Responsible</b></i>	<i><b>Time Line</b></i>
Establish volunteer programs with full time Court Volunteer/ Outreach Coordinator	Personnel time; funding for Volunteer/ Outreach Coordinator, office space, office furniture/ equipment	Court Administration and Finance; S.H.I.P. Committee and Work Group; Courts and Their Community Committee	Target within 2 years
Seek additional funding for staff and space	Personnel time and funding	Court Administration and Finance; S.H.I.P. Committee and Work Group; Courts and Their Community Committee	Target within 1 year
On-going training for court staff addressing all currently available community resources	Personnel time; funding for materials	Court Administration and Finance; S.H.I.P. Committee and Work Group; Courts and Their Community Committee	Currently ongoing
Pursue PR-Regional grants for community service announcements	Personnel time;	Court Administration and Finance; S.H.I.P. Committee and Work Group; Courts and Their Community Committee	Target within 1 year
Create orientation / video presentations for case type specific areas and distribution of above.	Personnel time; funding for materials	Court Administration and Finance; FLF; S.H.I.P. Committee and Work Group; Courts and Their Community	Target within 1 year

**SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA****COUNTY OF STANISLAUS**

Date Submitted 9/30/02

Contact Name: Suzanne Whitlock (209)252-7737

		Committee	Preliminary steps completed by FLF for AB1058 issues
Create Public Education presentations & materials	Personnel time; funding for materials	Court Administration and Finance; FLF; S.H.I.P. Committee and Work Group; Courts and Their Community Committee	Target within 1 year
Explore possible establishment and expansion of self-help clinics	Personnel time; funding for materials, space	Court Administration and Finance; FLF; S.H.I.P. Committee and Work Group; Courts and Their Community Committee	Target within 1 year
Explore possibility of establishing Courthouse self-help center and remote locations.	Personnel time; funding for materials, space	Court Administration and Finance; FLF; S.H.I.P. Committee and Work Group; Courts and Their Community Committee	Target within 1 year
Identify who needs what type of assistance	Personnel time; survey and report materials	Court Technology: S.H.I.P. Committee and Work Group; Courts and Their Community Committee	Ongoing <b>Base line surveys completed</b>
Design and promote cultural bridges between groups through their accepted community leaders participation	Personnel time;	S.H.I.P. Committee and Work Group	Ongoing
Establish more Self-help information locations within the Courthouse	Personnel time; funding for materials, space	Court Technology: S.H.I.P. Committee and Work Group; Courts and Their Community Committee	Ongoing
Increase collaborative effort within agencies via increases in networking systems	Personnel time; funding for materials	S.H.I.P. Committee and Work Group; Courts and Their Community Committee	Ongoing
Take the courts to the community, develop outreach program that includes ethnic and cultural	Personnel time; funding for program	S.H.I.P. Committee and Work Group; Courts and Their Community	Within 2 years

diversity	materials and printing, advertising, office space	Committee; Court Technology, Small Claims Advisor, Administration, and other court personnel	
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**3.E.3. Current resources that can be brought to bear:**

- Current websites to include more information, visuals, links, more user friendly
- Court volunteer guides – Student, senior STARS personnel
- Use less legal terminology on legal documents and in the process of communication in court system
- Get the people with the knowledge to work on pamphlets, clinics

**3.E.4. Ways to leverage the use of current resources:**

- Greater collaborative effort within agencies, increase in networking systems
- Provide all agencies with a “Court Directory” of all court services available. What do we do? Where are we located? Resource guides

**3.E.5. Ways in which to increase available resources:**

- Establish volunteer programs and hire a full time coordinator to manage and teach system, educate the public
- Seek additional funding for additional staff and space
- Educate existing staff with on-going training including all community resources available. Use brown bag format to share information and procedures
- Information binders to be made available at court counters for all available resources
- Conflict management resolution training – Use workplace wellness program (no \$ outlay)

**3.E.6. Identifying and meeting unmet needs:**

- Identifying who needs help and what needs are (use public surveys)
- More free legal advice needed – self-help centers or clinics, etc.
- Ethnic background and cultural barriers need to be bridged by personal out-reach by accepted community leaders
- Provide general understanding of court system
  - a) After needs are identified:
    - Establish self-help clinics, topic specific. Offer a continuous basis

- Partnership with other agencies to go out into the community e.g., Modesto Police community academy meetings

b) Court Academy Development:

- Take the courts to the community, develop outreach program that includes ethnic and cultural diversity
- Bridge the communication gap

#### **4. SUSTAINING THE ACTION PLAN:**

Successful implementation of Court's Action Plan To Assist Self-Represented Litigants can only be maintained by earning the continuing wholehearted support of all who have helped in the development of this Action Plan. New collaborations and lines of communication with other community groups and service agencies and organizations will be required to provide infusions of new ideas and energy. Continuing the collaboration with the Court's community to fully achieve the Plans primary result of maximizing the numbers informed court users who have ready access to justice services will require continuing communication with the Court's partners and the community as a whole. Providing information about projects and services together with evaluations of the Plan's component tasks to the Court's partners will be required. Efforts must be made to encourage buy-in by community members.

It is anticipated that this Action Plan will require frequent updates and refinement as implementation proceeds and results measured. The Court must demonstrate its commitment to assisting the self-represented and all Court users in actions as well as words. However, it must be emphasized that more funding must be provided to the Courts to allow the Courts to continue projects started and anticipated under this plan to pay for the additional court staff required to keep the plans moving forward, to pay for necessary equipment and space, and to pay for the costs of materials which have been, and will continue to be, created to truly implement the projects described herein.

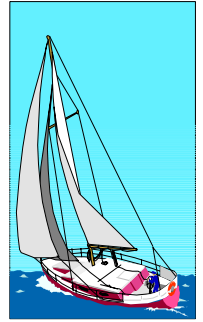


# SHIP - Self-Help Information Project

## Assisting Self-Represented Litigants

Revised 9/25/02

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**TOGETHER WITH ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE SHIP –  
Self-Help Information Project Committee as follows:**

It is the mission of the Superior Court to carry out its obligations using the laws of the State of California and the State and Federal Constitution in a fair, impartial, efficient, and safe manner; to protect the rights of all individuals as guaranteed by our laws and our constitutions.



## **S.H.I.P. – Self-Help Information Project**

Our Mission: To make the courts in Stanislaus County simple to use by people who don't have lawyers.

### **STANISLAUS COUNTY LAW LIBRARY**

#### *ission Statement*

**The Stanislaus County Law Library provides free access to legal information for the judiciary, members of the State Bar, public officials, and to all residents of the county for the purpose of education and research.**





## **CENSUS 2000 HIGHLIGHTS – Stanislaus County: Population, Sex, Age, Race, Median Income, Poverty Level, (summary of some facts)**

### **TOTAL POPULATION:**

- **The total population of Stanislaus County is 446,997:**
- 49.25% (219,912) are male
- 50.8% (227,085) are female
- the median\* age is 31.7 years (the age at which ½ of total responses are less than the median age and ½ of total responses are more than the median age)
- 34.3% (153,099) are ages 0-19 years
- 8% (35,582) are under 5 years old
- 63.5% (141,871) are Hispanic or Latino (of any race)
- median\* earnings in 1999 of full-time, year-round workers (dollars)
  - Male: \$36,969.00
  - Female: \$26,595.00
  - Households: \$40,101.00
    - Households Less than \$10,000 to \$24,999.00: 30.3% (43,990)
      - Households Less than \$10,000.00: 9.3% (13,542)
  - Families: \$44,703.00
    - Families Less than \$10,000 to \$24,999.00: 25.2% (27,736)
      - Families Less than \$10,000.00: 6.6% (7,264)
- percent of population for whom poverty status is determined
  - 16.0% for all ages
  - 20.5% children under 18 years
  - 8.8% aged 65 years and older
  - 12.3% of families
- employment status – population 16 years and over:
  - civilian labor force
    - employed: 54.1% (174,328)
      - private wage and salary workers 76.7% (133,672)
      - government workers 24.7% (25,555)
      - self-employed workers in own not incorporated business 8.1% (14,197)
      - unpaid family workers 0.5% (904)
    - unemployed: 7.1% (22,992)
  - not in labor force: 38.8% (125,021)

\* Median = point at which ½ of all responses are less than the median response and ½ are more than the median



## **CENSUS 2000 – A Local View.** quoted in part from the **Modesto Bee**, May 15, 2002, - [www.modbee.com](http://www.modbee.com)

### **CENSUS 2000 HIGHLIGHTS**

**POVERTY RATES:** A higher percentage of Stanislaus County families lived in poverty in 2000 than in 1990. In Modesto, the family poverty rate climbed from 10.5 percent in 1990 to 12.2 percent in 2000.

**PAY INEQUITY:** The pay gap between men and women is greater in the valley than elsewhere in California. Women working full time in Stanislaus County earn 72 percent as much as men. Statewide, women earn 78 percent as much.

**HOME VALUES:** Median home values in 2000 were \$125,300 in Stanislaus County, \$142,400 in San Joaquin County, \$111,100 in Merced County and \$149,800 in Tuolumne County. The state median was \$211,500.

**MONTHLY RENT:** Rents rose a greater percentage in Stanislaus County than California as a whole between 1990 and 2000. Rents jumped 54.5 percent in Riverbank, 37.8 percent in Salida, 28.3 percent in Turlock, 27.8 percent in Ceres and 23.6 percent in Modesto. The state median increase was 20.5 percent.

**DISABLED RESIDENTS:** The valley has a higher percentages of residents with disabilities than California as a whole. In Modesto, nearly 9 percent of children are disabled, along with 24 percent of adults and 47 percent of those over 65.

**HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES:** Graduation rates in the valley are lower than elsewhere in California, and the gap is growing. The percentage of adults with diplomas declined between 1990 and 2000 in Atwater, Hilmar, Merced, Winton, French Camp, Ceres, Patterson, Columbia and Jamestown.

**COLLEGE GRADUATES:** Adults elsewhere in California are nearly twice as likely as those in the valley to have attained bachelor's or graduate degrees. There are twice as many grade-school dropouts as college graduates in Merced County.

from the **Modesto Bee** - [www.modbee.com](http://www.modbee.com)

**”Census sets us apart”,** quoted in part

**By J.N. SBRANTI**

**BEE STAFF WRITER**

Just-released census data reveal dramatic differences among the communities of the Northern San Joaquin Valley and foothills.

The Census 2000 data, released Tuesday, tell about our region's wealthy, well-educated enclaves, and dirt-poor towns filled with people who have not finished grade school.

Income levels caught up some from 1990 to 2000 -- but not much -- compared with the rest of California, but the region is way off the pace when it comes to college education.

In Modesto, for example, less than 17 percent of adults have graduated from four-year colleges, while nearly 27 percent statewide hold at least bachelor's degrees.

.....

There are far more poor pockets than rich ones in the valley and foothills. And poverty is more widespread here than in California as a whole.

.....

"These numbers are really important for policy-makers and program administrators in terms of understanding what needs to be done to improve a community," Entin said. "It's also important for people to understand the communities in which they live and work, and to understand themselves in relation to those communities."

Census data can help people do that.

.....

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**Stanislaus County Bar Association**

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**Stanislaus County Librarian**

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**FRIENDS OUTSIDE-  
REPRESENTATIVE**

**MODESTO BEE –  
REPRESENTATIVE**

# Superior Court of Stanislaus County

## Participants

### **Stanislaus County**

Hon. Wray Ladine  
Judge of the Superior Court  
P.O. Box 3488  
Modesto, Ca 95353

### **Stanislaus County**

Hon. William Mayhew  
Judge of the Superior Court  
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### **Stanislaus County**

Hon. Susan D. Siefkin  
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### **Stanislaus County**

Hon. Marie Silveira  
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### **Stanislaus County Superior Court**

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### **Stanislaus County Superior Court**

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**Stanislaus County Superior Court**

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**Stanislaus County Superior Court**

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Receptionist  
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